

Environment – Civil20

Civil Society Recommendations to the G20

The G20 has committed itself to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and build an inclusive and sustainable future for all. The obligation of governments to sustainably ensure the human rights to water and sanitation for all without discrimination must be the driving force behind the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Water and Sanitation are human rights. While the fundamental role of water as a human need and a human right has been acknowledged by the UN and member states, strategies to secure this human right too often face conflicts with interests and actions competing for the same resource. We are approaching a global tipping point in the hydrosphere where the biocultural sustainability of water resources is threatened by the cumulative and synergistic impacts of over-extraction and pollution. Achieving long-term sustainability of our hydrosphere requires re-embedding social, cultural, and environmental needs. This counts within and throughout local, regional, and global structures that plan, finance, develop, manage, and use our world's water. A rights-based approach is the best way to ensure that a pro-poor and global justice perspective predominates, with regards to access, use and control of water resources. Access to water and sanitation is the start of economic and social development, food and nutrition security.

- We call upon the G20 to promote an integrated planning approach at watershed level, prior to investing in large scale infrastructure in particular hydropower and large-scale irrigation systems. This will ensure that water flow is secured for human consumption, agriculture as well as natural ecosystems and their regenerative role for water supply.
- We call on the G20 to put water and sanitation central to achieving the SDGs and to set clear, measurable (annual) targets to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

No more water grabbing. Beyond the state, a whole array of different actors, both old and new, are involved in the global water grab. These include specialised water-targeted investment funds that seek to profit from the monetarisation of water and its transformation into an economic asset gaining in scarcity value. It also encompasses a whole host of transnational corporations, including large private water companies, agribusinesses and the extractive industries. Water grabbing also involves all those actors whose activities and profits depend on the trade in 'virtual water'. The 'virtual water' concept is used to measure the amount of water that is 'embedded' within the production, processing and trade of commodities. Large-scale hydro-power projects involving the construction of (mega)dams and affecting entire river basin can incur high social and environmental costs including a huge risk of biodiversity loss. New technologies such as hydraulic fracturing or 'fracking' represent a major threat when it comes to water depletion and pollution. Large-scale mining activities often destroy both the physical-hydrological as well as the institutional 'waterscape', altering the courses of rivers and polluting water and soils, as well as transforming existing systems of water rights and responsibilities. Large irrigation schemes in many parts of the world become mechanisms for accumulation by large landholders, while small-scale farmers are dispossessed.

- We call for an equitable allocation of water that raises living standards, revives rural communities, and recognizes productive uses of water for livelihoods and the environment, even when these benefits do not have clear monetary valuation.
- We call on the G20 to reduce their "water footprint" and to put an end to all forms of water grabbing by companies from G20 countries and leave control over 'local' water resources to 'local' authorities and communities that follow standards of sustainable use.

Water and environment are a public good, not a commodity! A market-based management of water and natural resources, especially the privatization of water and water eco systems and its services with poor sustainability requirements and control mechanisms, jeopardizes the access to water for poor and marginalized groups in many countries. The result is a conversion of the rights of access to and use of water from a public or commons right, monitored or regulated by the state, to a privately owned exclusionary right that is driven by economic profit, rather than human and environmental sustainability. We call on the G20

- to ensure that water and water services remain under public and democratic control with public interests and rights, including the need of natural systems for water resources, is held paramount.
- to protect and restore water catchment forests and wetland areas and to enforce the polluter-pays-principle to ensure the provision of clean water resources.

Marine debris has reached gigantic dimensions around the world. Non-biodegradable plastic remains accumulate in huge garbage patches. Plastic can be detected in almost all marine organisms. Via the food chain it enters human consumption. We urge the G20 to:

- Commit to the outcome of “The Ocean Conference” (5-9 June 2017, New York) to implement SDG14; and resume the Global Marine Environment Protection (GMEP) Initiative and use it as a platform for exchange of information and best practices in marine protection.
- Adopt a G20 Action Plan to combat Marine Litter by going a step further than the G7 by developing a roadmap with concrete and measurable goals for implementation; effective measures to tackle global marine littering by highlighting waste prevention, resource efficiency, precautionary and polluter-pays principles.
- Not pursue any **deep sea mining** until significant adverse impacts on marine ecosystems and on communities in developing states can be excluded or effectively minimized.
- **Resource efficiency:** We welcome the German presidency’s efforts to establish a G20 resource efficiency agenda and urge G20 members to lead the way by committing to establishing ‘cross-sectoral, cross-resource and full-supply chain’ policies and frameworks that incentivise waste reduction and resource efficiency whilst removing perverse taxes, standards and trade rules that discourage circular approaches.

Illegal wildlife trade represents the fourth-largest illegal trade with a volume of approximately USD 19 billion a year, after drug trafficking, product piracy and human trafficking. Poaching and wildlife crime endanger the conservation of biodiversity, but also threaten the development of the affected countries as well as the safety and well-being of the people living there. The high degree of corruption and lack of transparency that is associated with the illegal wildlife trade lowers the willingness to invest in supply, transit, and consumer countries, thus hindering these countries’ economic development. We call on the G20 to:

- Commit to fight corruption in wildlife crime in the Leaders’ Communiqué;
- Support, through the Anti-Corruption Working Group, the establishment of robust corruption risk assessment and management procedures in the wildlife sector, supported by iterative monitoring and evaluation;
- Encourage financial policy and regulatory bodies, for example the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), to redefine existing principles or guidelines to make more explicit links between wildlife crime and financial crime.

Civil20 is the G20 engagement group of the international civil society. It represents organisations and individuals from all continents, giving civil society a loud voice in the G20. Find out more at www.civil-20.org.